

Remarks

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 13, 15, 17, and 21-25 and objected to claims 4, 7, 9-12, 16, 18-20, 26, and 27. Claims 1, 15, 22, and 23 have been amended. Claim 4 has been canceled. Claims 1-3 and 5-27 remain in the application.

The Examiner rejected claims 8, 13, 17, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicants regard as the invention. In particular, the Examiner contends that there is no antecedent basis for the term “the transverse direction” in dependent claims 8, 13, 17, and 21. Independent claims 1 and 15, from which the rejected claims depend, have been amended to make it clear that the original claim term “transversely” means “in a transverse direction.” Applicants consider this amendment merely a clarification of the original claim language, and not an amendment affecting the scope of the claims. The amended claims now provide proper antecedent basis for the rejected claims. The §112 rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 15, and 22-25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Boelaars (US 6,568,522) because Boelaars discusses the possibility of having a conveyor mat on a tilted platform to allow gravity to urge articles from one end to the other. Independent claims 1, 15, 22, and 23 have been amended to require that at least some of the rollers be arranged to rotate about oblique axes. By this amendment, claim 1 is now equivalent in scope to original dependent claim 4, which the Examiner indicated would be allowed if written in independent form including all the limitations of its base claim. Amended independent claims 15, 22, and 23 are also now in condition for

allowance because Boelaars does not disclose all the limitations of the claims. For example, Boelaars does not show rollers arranged to rotate about oblique axes. Consequently, the §102(e) rejection should now be withdrawn.

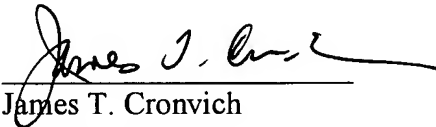
Applicants respectfully request entry of these amendments and allowance of claims 1-3 and 5-27 in view of the amendments and remarks.

Applicants further request that the original, electronically filed drawings be replaced by the formal replacement drawings appended to this response. No substantive changes have been made to the drawings.

This response is being filed within three months of the Office Action, so no extension of time or other fee should be due. If, however, a fee is due, authorization to charge it to Deposit Account 12-0090 is hereby given.

Respectfully submitted,
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